

HERITAGE 2018

Proceedings of the 6th International Conference
on Heritage and Sustainable Development
10th Anniversary Edition

VOLUME 1

Edited by

Rogério Amoêda

Sérgio Lira

Cristina Pinheiro

Juan M. Santiago Zaragoza

Julio Calvo Serrano

Fabián García Carrillo



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for sustainable development

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*Granada, Spain
12-15 June*

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Nature Based Solutions to adapt cities to climate change	555
R. Rey Mellado, F. Moreno Vargas, T. Franchini Alonso & C. Pozo Sánchez	
Rehabilitation of industrial heritage as sustainable strategy: keys for the case study of “La Trinidad” Glass Factory	563
B. Sánchez-Montañés, B. Rey-Álvarez, M. V. Castilla & L. González-Boado	
Built environment of Curonian Spit as UNESCO world heritage site: recent changes and perspective	571
D. Traškinaitė	
The Sustainable Garden of Pirámides de Güímar	579
D. Valcárcel Ortiz	
The urban dimensions of historic sizes with heritage protection in the Czech Republic	587
J. Zdráhalová, J. Jehlík & V. Rýpar	

Chapter 4 - Heritage and economics

Cinque Terre: terraced landscape preservation and tourism sustainability	603
S. Acacia, M. Casanova, E. Macchioni, F. Pompejano, C. Repetti & F. Segantin	
Heritage-led urban regeneration as a catalyst for sustainable urban development	613
A. Elseragy, A. Elnokaly & M. Abul-Ela	
Reviewing the definition of museum. The not for profit statement in Catalanian museums	627
A. Laporte, J. Bobes & X. Ulled Bertran	
Beyond tourism: contributions of heritage to the local economy	635
D. D. Rypkema & B. Grosicki	
The role of a music archive in the sustainable development of rural communities based in the Eastern Cape, South Africa	645
L. Watkins	
Authenticity as the first condition of the value of artworks and heritage. Modern forensic sciences methods in the authentication process of artworks	653
D. Wilk	

Chapter 5 - Heritage and culture

Bullfight of the sea: fishing gears and artefacts in Algarve (Portugal) between the 30s and 60s	665
N. Batista & M. M. Gonçalves	
Community crafts and culture: empowering indigenous communities	677
K. Brown & J. A. Brown, T. Muñoz Brenes & A. Soto Chaves	
Death of the intangible: a case study of heritage loss in Japan	689
V. Cang & Y. Kitamura	
Requalification for tourism: the ancient palmenti around Etna as attractors	697
F. Cantone	

Burning the ships: the edge of maritime heritage	707
E. Carbonell	
Cultural heritage and territorial development: a comparative analysis between Italy and Morocco	719
I. Caruso, T. Vitolo & A. Bertini	
Historic Sites as a system for the preservation of architectural heritage: the case of Granada	731
A. Castellón Valderrama	
Goiás State University as locus for heritage preservation: genesis of a memory center	741
P. R. Chagas, M. A. Cunha Torres, A. C. Filgueiras & F. R. Gouveia	
Historical re-evaluation in central European capital cities	749
H. Clancy	
<u>Future heritage. Starting again from culture</u>	<u>759</u>
<u>A. A. Clemente</u>	
Ancient bridges of Sicily: punctual signs of a past that disappears	767
T. Firrone, C. Bustinto & A. Zappa	
Water, wells, wheels and wealth	779
M. M. Gonçalves, M. T. Pérez-Cano & S. Rosendahl	
Ecocriticism: declination of a complex memory	791
C. Grandi	
Buildings tell the truth: Fener-Balat as a case of vernacular in the midst of Istanbul	797
Ş. Ö. Gür & S. Y. Erdinç	
Old factory - new Cultural Centre: Historical Bomonti Beer Factory in Istanbul	805
G. K. Heinz	
Colonization villages: urban trace and architectural typology. The case of Peñuelas	815
A. I. Jiménez-Sánchez, F. J. Lafuente-Bolívar, G. Fernández-Adarve & J. M. Santiago-Zaragoza	
Changing representations of heritage in Kings Park, Perth, Western Australia	825
R. Jones	
Spatial identity and cultural heritage hidden in mundane street objects	831
M. Juvancic	
Preservation and keeping alive of intangible cultural heritage project	839
N. Kiliç & İ Erdoğan	
Historical Database of Istanbul	843
E. Kudde & İ. İlze	
Pop-up heritage: conservation of temporary architecture - a case study of Bamboo Theatres in Hong Kong	849
T. Y. Man	
From rejection to consecration. Italian key culture elements in Montreal sustainable solutions	861
A. Masson-Labonté	

Chapter 5

Heritage and culture

Future heritage. Starting again from culture

A. A. Clemente

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ABSTRACT: On the occasion of the 150th anniversary of Unification of Italy (2011), a survey revealed that among the “reasons of national pride” was our artistic and cultural heritage (74.9%). It was possible to expect a resumption of interest (and conscience), about the importance of protection. That was not there. It is evident from the collapse of important archeological areas, the lack of maintenance of cultural assets and, above all, the absence of a serious safeguard policy. What is the reason for this gap so wide between reality and potentials too often unexpressed? Several parties have referred to the lack of adequate funding. That is not the case. The causes are multiple and interdependent. Three main ones. The first is of a cultural order. Culture comes from the *latincolere* which, before cultivating, means taming a place to live there. Otherwise, it is the conscious choice of “embodying the sign of man on a landscape that will be altered forever” (Yourcenar, 1974). The second corresponds to the fact that each designing act must be able to relate to the context not only as a space of proximity but also as a focus on relational and topological values. This implies the ability to refer to a precise ethical foundation: to nourish “a profound feeling for the beauty of the soil [...] looking for the beauty of the landscape not so much to build on it as to serve it in construction” (Wright, 1991). Lastly, perhaps the most serious risk. The ruling of the Council of State no. 4614 of 3 October 2017 provides that the public administration may entrust the task of drafting an urban plan free of charge (by public invitation). Is it a professional category problem? No, it is about everyone: environment, territory, and landscape are common goods par excellence. Failing to take an interest in it means to go helpless to a “illusory progress” (Zanzotto, 2009), which will be difficult to go back.

1 INTRODUCTION

In 2011, on the occasion of the 150th anniversary of the Unification of Italy, the survey “Italians and Italy” revealed how, among “the reasons of national pride”, in the first place (74.9%) there was the artistic heritage and cultural (AA.VV., 2011). A widespread awareness in front of which it was legitimate to expect a resumption of interest and interest conscience from the State, on the strategic importance of policies aimed at protection and valorisation of cultural and landscape assets. That there were not. This is also confirmed by the research of Historical Centres and the future of the country. This is the incipit:

“for over 30 years we have not carried out research on the overall situation of Italian historical centers. This forgetfulness is really worrying if one thinks of the importance that the historical centers have for the economy and for the image of the Country” (AA.VV., 2017).

Pride and forgetfulness. United by heritage, disinterested in its conditions. Beware of heredity of the past and careless of his destiny. A peculiar fact that introduces some questions: what it is due to this cognitive strabismus? How is this divergent attitude justified? And again, what is the reason for the oblivion regarding historic centers? For many, the answer is to be found in the absence of a law that guarantees adequate financing in the long run. It is the belief of those who believe that heritage historical may express its cultural value only in the alternative to economic value; only if it creates profits; only if it contributes decisively to generating economic activities deriving from his protection. It's not like this:

“from a distance of thirty kilometers, who goes to Chartres, sees her in front of him to crown for hours still walking, with nothing but the bulk of his cathedral and its towers. It was a city-cathedral [...]. The peasant could live in a hovel, and the knight in a castle, but both participated in equal measure and with a spirit equal to the life of the cathedral, to its slow construction through the centuries, to its own ascent, to its greatness reached, to its daily rituals. All men indiscriminately had in the cathedral a common life, there was not a man who closed at night in the room of his misery without him to know that he had ,outside, nearby or a bit farther, a wealth which was his too” (Vittorini, 1946).

Cultural heritage guarantees urban identity, social cohesion and, more generally, a better quality of life, factors that interest the whole society. And not only those who are engaged in extracting economic wealth from the places of history and history memory. This is the thesis of the Council of Europe Framework Convention of Faro:

“cultural heritage is one set of resources inherited from the past that populations identify, regardless of who owns the property, as a reflection and expression of their values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions, in continuous evolution. It includes all aspects of the environment that are the result of the interaction during the time between populations and places [and] is constituted by a group of people that gives value to specific aspects of the cultural heritage, and which, in the framework of public action, wishes to support them and pass them on to future generations” (AA.VV., 2005).

Let it be said incidentally that the Faro Convention came into force in June 2011 and was signed by Italy in 2013, but not yet ratified. It is necessary to change point of view. And introduce the hypothesis that true profitability is in the sense of identification that the community finds in the cultural heritage; in the sense of rooting that he, who lives in the places of collective memory, feels; in the sense of belonging that one feels towards his own historical centre.

2 BEAUTY, CONTEXT, LANGUAGE

The problem of artistic and cultural heritage cannot be reduced to questions of legal and economic nature. The causes are multiple and interdependent. Three main ones. The first is cultural. Culture comes from *colere* which means to cultivate; an action that, since nomadic life was abandoned in favor of sedentary agriculture, is characterized by a continuous and attentive care of a territory in which one lives permanently. This is the result of the extensive use of *colere* in the sense of taming a place in order to inhabit it. A fundamental etymological meaning for architecture because it is on this principle that the historical centers were built. For centuries, in Italy many urban realities have been built on the premise that “to build up means to collaborate with the earth, to impress the sign of man on a landscape that will be modified forever; contribute also to the slow transformation that is the life of the city itself” (Yourcenar, 1974). An awareness that has produced a unique relationship with the territory; that has been able to interpret the *genius loci*; that has transformed the space of the city in the place of collective identity. This relationship went in crisis in relatively recent times:

“the systematic critique of the modern movement and of his accomplishments, undertaken in the 60s, had the effect of freeing a nostalgia of the urban whose traditional scales would become the object of re-appropriation in two complementary ways: on the one hand directly from the architectural movement called post-modern, on the other indirectly, from the role now granted to the preservation of the ancient urban patrimony” (Choay, 1992).

This last position is the one which led many to uncritically exalt the past. Without dwelling on the fact that the real problem is not the return to the time that was; but another: regaining the technical skills and awareness that “building a port means to fertilize the beauty of a gulf (Yourcenar, 1974). This principle has been disregarded. Reality today goes in a different direction which the cinema has recorded in a masterly manner. Peppino Impastato in “I cento passi” (One hundred steps), of the film director Marco Tullio Giordana, makes a speech of extraordinary intensity:

“one goes up here and could even think that nature always wins, that is still stronger than man. But it is not like that. After all things, even the worse ones, once done then find a logic, a justification for the mere fact of existing! They make these lousy houses with aluminum windows, brick walls alive [...] balconies. People go there to live, they put tendons, geraniums, and television. And after a while everything is part of the landscape, there is. It exists. Nobody remembers how it used to look like. It does not take much to destroy beauty [...] So instead of the political struggle, class consciousness, all manifestations and these nonsenses we should remind people what beauty is. Help them recognize it. To defend it. [...] Beauty is important. Everything else comes from beauty”.

Perhaps this is precisely the point: deciding which side to stay on. On the side of those who build buildings that will become part of the landscape, for the sole fact of existing, or to return to believe in the beauty as a priority objective to pursue. The latter is a very difficult road, fraught with difficulty, full of misunderstandings and conflicts with those who reduce any question to the mere economic and financial aspect. But it is probably also the only way to go for those who want to “collaborate with time in its aspect of “past”, grasping its spirit or modifying it, extending it, almost, towards a longer future (Yourcenar, 1974).

The second cause is closely related to the first. Give a future to the historical centers and, more in general to architecture, it means going back to: “*looking for the beauty of the landscape not so much to build on it, but rather to use it in construction*” (Wright, 1991). Reflect on the existing, on the nature of the soil, on its topographic accidents coincides with that culture of the project that has always given priority to the search for a relationship balanced with the “*context, to identify reasons and ways of its imbalances and verify that each proposal of change is appropriate to its nature and consistent with its historical experience*”. Context, etymologically, derives from *contéxere* composed of *cum* (together) and *téxere* (weave) and means intertwining city and architecture, landscape and territory, tradition and innovation. To weave together past and present. Contrary to what happens to a conspicuous part of contemporary architecture which is deliberately disharmonic technical gesture as it happens with the archisculpture, a form of the whole, free in the space that arises “*on an ideal pedestal, as the emblem of a pure Beauty, and just for this irresistible, indisputable, unspeakable*” (Tadini, 2002). Ineffable by definition, these constructions represent the radical opposition to the idea that “only a very small part of architecture belongs to art: the sepulcher and the monument. The rest, all that serves a purpose, must be excluded from the Kingdom of art (Loos, 1962). Devoid of any relationship with the history of the forms, archisculpture arises out of time. Its shape is the demonstration of the discontinuity from the utopias, from the projects of the past and from the desire of imagining a possible trajectory for the future. A temporary monumentality, which aims at the present, not eternity. Its formal outcome is an orphan of any link with tradition. It is a testimony ended in itself that lives in the space of its envelope. Archisculpture is volume in first-person, vertical celebration of authors:

“that confusing our discipline with any three-dimensional experience, produce unknown objects, which sometimes have to do with the mimesis of nature, sometimes with the allusion to an unknown world. Today the arbitrariness of the form is evident in the buildings themselves, once you take care of the construction outside the project. But when arbitrariness becomes so clearly visible in buildings, architecture is dead, it disappears” (Moneo, 2004).

Archisculpture is the out-place for excellence. Building without citizenship that stands as a universe self-referential; extraterritorial defense immune to any relationship with the context; elevation without urbanity. It remains an isolated event, an exercise in dissonance, a technical gesture without any environmental repercussions. It is inside the urban territory but outside its plots. Form that cannot be repeated a second time because unique. Its outward appearance is, in some ways an absurd (Silber, 2009).

Fortunately, there are other directions; different directions of travel; radically different itineraries:

“architecture which does not become tradition, which does not leave a cultural heritage, which does not favor a social exchange between the past and the present, which does not leave a mark of its own contemporaneity, is a fragile architecture and vulnerable. Architecture has always incorporated our conception of the world, its structure is the how we mean the structure of the universe at the present time. From the monumentality of ancient civilizations to decorative details present in all vernacular architecture, the human spirit expresses itself with creativity on the fabric already built. It is our soul, our mind, our heart: here are its beats”.

It is the idea behind the research of the relationship between spatial structure and landscape, topography and identity urban, between place and city. And it is also the itinerary that identifies the search for a relationship as a priority balanced between nature and history:

“nature is the original state, history is its transformation and both through their interrelations define the reality with which the act of building must be measured. A building, a set of buildings, a city, a cultivated landscape or otherwise anthropized, become place, when they establish and express a balanced relationship between nature and history. Another building which is added has value only if it participates in this balance by introducing innovation into tradition” (De Carlo, 1987).

And it is precisely the space between nature and history that is needed to put under observation to understand how necessary it is to set aside, definitively, any ambitions of spectacular, solitary and self-referential monumentality. Architecture cannot be a technical gesture abstractly sculptural, deliberately decontextualized, disarticulated and often out of scale to the surrounding environment. On the contrary, it is necessary to recover the measure which, both in Greek (*métrios*) and in Latin (*metiri*), means prudence, moderation, wisdom; that is the concept that underlies the construction of historical centers.

The areas where the ancient prevails; the punctual surfaces inside which the cultural heritage insists; the open spaces among the monuments are all places of extraordinary importance. And they must be object of protection and development; the context of the historical center, however, cannot be understood only as a space of proximity but also as an attention to the relational and topological values of a much wider field. It is necessary to expand the look at the territorial palimpsest in which *“the inhabitants incessantly cancel and rewrite the old incunabulum of the soil”* (Corboz, 1985). This presupposes that the territory is not a data but the outcome of processes of transformations put in place by the societies that inhabit it. And it is precisely in this sense that it is necessary to activate a renewed reading ability to interpret the signs of physical space, to identify the stratifications, to describe the forms of the urban and rural landscape.

“The “reading” starts from the idea that in each architectural event, of any scale, there are the signs of the events that have passed from the origin to each stage of its development, and that if one were able to decipher the meanings of those signs and reconstruct the network of relationships that connected them with those of other architectural events contiguous in space and time, it would be possible to thoroughly comprehend the place that contains them all: its history and therefore its glories and its sufferings, its strength and its weaknesses, its affinities and incompatibility towards the various forms of use, its capacity to resist transformations, the limits beyond which it cannot bear change, how and to what extent the transformation improves it, makes it worse, destroys it” (De Carlo, 1992).

In the light of these considerations the theme is no longer just the protection and development of the historic center but also the ability to analyze its urban quality, identify its land project, the construction rules of public space to disseminate them in a wider context, in order to manage a difficult conceptual move: the transition from the Center to the historical territory. It is not just a semantic question, nor is it legal. And it is not even the simple overcoming of a limit. It is rather the recognition of the fact that expanding the gaze means to recognize the value of cultural heritage to a wider settlement structure which becomes the subject of an integrated intervention strategy. And that, in full awareness of having to do with unique and unrepeatable resources, it assumes the environment and the landscape as the decisive elements for a new territorial structure.

Apparently disconnected from the first two, there is the third cause: the language. Italo Calvino in *Lezioni americane (Six Memos for the Next Millennium)* said:

“sometimes it seems to me that an epidemic pestilential has struck humanity in the faculty that most characterizes it, that is, the use of the word, a plague of the language that manifests itself as a loss of cognitive force and immediacy, as an automatism that tends to level the expression on the most generic, anonymous, abstract formulas, to dilute the meanings, to smooth the expressive points, to extinguish every spark that spurts from the clash of words with new circumstances”.

A belief that was immediately shared by both Giancarlo De Carlo: *“we are in spreading the awareness that even architecture is affected by that plague of language that Calvino describes masterfully”* and Bernardo Secchi: *“most of the time the polemics are born from the inattention and the untidiness with which words and signs are used and understood, by a sort of plague of language”.*

Since then the conditions have changed. From bad to worse. Many of the terms used in the territorial disciplines have deteriorated with the consequence of making the look blurred. There are words that have marked an era as a General Regulatory Plan, Standard, Zoning. They used to identify shared values, they used to be precise cultural references on how to understand the city. Lenses that allowed to interpret reality. But times change. And the words change. To the point that the old ones become aphonic. And yet, it is necessary to remember how those same terms alluded to a consolidated cultural itinerary also in the management of interventions on the territory; that has been abandoned. Without being replaced. And with an aggravating circumstance: we continued to use old words, charging them with improper and often counterproductive meanings. As evidenced by the litany of those architects who, continuing to invoke the teachings of the “holy fathers of modern urbanism”, hope for a return to the certain and reassuring norms of a space that, at least on paper, can have certain results, safe borders, traced regular. It is the theory of *“how cities should work and what should be positive for the inhabitants and their economic activities. They believe in all this with such devotion that when reality contradicts them [...] they are forced to put it aside with a shrug”* (Jacobs, 2000). And with a single result: to anesthetize with respect to reality.

The negative repercussions, however, do not stop there. When the word abdicates with respect to its semantic content, it becomes indispensable to circumscribe the meaning of the terms, to give an explanation for the vocabulary, to dwell on the meaning that a phrase assumes

in the context in which it is pronounced. In this way, every speech risks to become the premise for unproductive disputes and equally useless discussions. To understand this, it is sufficient to mention the fate of the term Recovery, ie the objective to be pursued in most of the historical centers (Title IV – General norms for the recovery of the existing building heritage. Cfr. art. 27 e 28 Legge 5 agosto 1978, n. 457). There is a Plan for the Recovery of the existing building heritage and the Urban Recovery Program. There is the variation for the Recovery Plan and the Recovery variant. Each of these locations refers to distinct legal fields, a different procedure and pursues different objectives. Furthermore, Redevelopment, Regeneration, Rehabilitation and Renewal have been added to the concept of Recovery, without the substantial differences and overlapping areas being clear. Reason why, very often, they are used as synonyms. All this, complicates the procedures, burdens the administrative process, lengthens the times dramatically, with disappointing results. And the architect pays the consequences because, when the lexical patrimony of a discipline is emptied of meaning, the power of the speaker decays; his authority; his legitimacy. And it is a problem that does not only concern operational practice but also the progressive increase in distrust by the recipients in the ability of the urban plan to have positive effects on the urban and territorial reality. And that's how it came to create a real abyss between the technical program of urbanism and the interest of the community. The plan is no longer seen as the instrument aimed at territorial governance; to the protection of the general over the particular; to the pre-eminence of the public over the private sector. The community considers the urban plan to be the same as any other administrative procedure; it struggles to understand its meaning; nor can it perceive its strategic importance. And above all, it does not see its usefulness.

3 CONCLUSIVE IDEAS

A reality so difficult that it was also reflected from a legal point of view. The municipality of Catanzaro, not having all the necessary funds to finance the tender, has provided a contract with compensation of 1 (one) € for the drafting of the Structural Plan, asking in advance the Corte dei Conti (Sezioneregione Calabria, Deliberazione 6/2016) if the procedure was correct. This is the answer:

“the municipal administration can proceed to the call for a public tender for the assignment of a free task of drafting the new municipal development plan, with the provision of a mere reimbursement of expenses incurred. However, the tender must integrate all the elements necessary for the exact identification of the content of the requested service, in order to allow the objective evaluation of the technical documents produced, without claim of remuneration, by the technicians interested in providing their professional work for free”.

The Consiglio di Stato established that the public purchaser can offer, to its service provider, alternative forms of remuneration to the economic one, because the financial profit *“is not considered indispensable by the living law of public contracts”* (Consiglio di Stato- Sentenza n. 4614/2017).

Faced with this legal scenario, it is probably even clearer how no financing law, even in the long term, can guarantee the protection and enhancement of the Italian artistic historical heritage: the main issue lies in the absence of the necessary tools to face a such a profound state of crisis of the plan.

Going back to choose beauty and widening the gaze to the historical territory is a problem of culture of the project that must find a new lexicon to reread the city, restructure the questions, seek a new theoretical awareness that *“once subtracted from the inexorability of some metaphysical scheme, reveals its contingency and the variety of its alternatives”*. Pursuing this perspective means taking leave from the modern urban planning program. Taking leave is not an easy task: it imposes the obligation to take a critical distance from the past without denying it, or worse, disown it. Taking leave means recognizing the importance of that program and the conceptual equipment that supported it, as monuments of western thought. Which, however, have made their time. Finally, taking leave means finding a new itinerary to restore centrality to

the urban plan. It is only within a planning framework, certain and effective, that the protection and enhancement of degraded monuments, historical sites and, more generally, of territory, environment and landscape can be found. It may appear to be the problem of a professional category; for some it may seem the prelude to a union claim; for others the request for a return to the certainties deriving from a consolidated knowledge and from principles valid as absolute truths, to be applied without any doubt. It is not so. It is something more serious because it concerns the whole society. The marginality of architecture and urbanism, in the context of public debate, is the same marginality in which the Italian artistic historical heritage is found: the common goods for excellence, or what should be the privileged field of work for both the architect and the urbanist.

Recovering is not easy; but necessary. Otherwise one risks to proceed inexperienced, towards that “illusory progress” (Zanzotto, 2009) from which it will be difficult to go back.

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HERITAGE 2018

6th International Conference on Heritage and Sustainable Development

Heritage 2018 - 6th International Conference on Heritage and Sustainable Development celebrates the 10th anniversary of Heritage Conferences. As the previous editions HERITAGE 2018 aimed at maintaining a state of the art event regarding the relationships between forms and kinds of heritage and the framework of sustainable development concepts, namely the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

However, the four dimensions of sustainable development (environment, economics, society and culture) are, as in the past, the pillars of this event defining an approach on how to deal with the specific subject of heritage sustainability. Furthermore, beyond the traditional aspects of heritage preservation and safeguarding the relevance and significance of the sustainable development concept was to be discussed and scrutinised by some of the most eminent worldwide experts.

For a long time now, heritage is no longer considered as a mere memory or a cultural reference, or even a place or an object.

As stated by some the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda, the role of cultural and social issues keeps enlarging the statement where environment and economics had initial the main role. The environmentalist approach (conceiving the world as an ecological system) enhanced the idea of a globalised world, where different geographic dimensions of actions, both local and global, emerged as the main relationships between producers, consumers and cultural specificities of peoples, philosophies and religions. In such a global context heritage became one of the key aspects for the enlargement of sustainable development concepts. Heritage is often seen through its cultural definition and no further discussion seems to be appropriate. However, sustainable development brings heritage concepts to another dimension, as it establishes profound relationships with economics, environment, and social aspects.

Nowadays, heritage preservation and safeguarding is constantly facing new and complex problems. Degradation of Heritage sites is not any more just a result of materials ageing or environmental actions. Factors such as global and local pollution, climate change, poverty, religion, tourism, commodification, ideologies and war (among others) are now in the cutting edge for the emerging of new approaches, concerns and visions about heritage.

The Editors